Import of live animals

987. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the animals especially dogs, which are brought by the importers, are often released by the Customs Officials after getting payment of minimum charges ignoring the fact that under rules these dogs are required to be kept in quarantine for a stipulated period;

(b) if so, the number of live animals imported during the last three years and released after getting minimum charges; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure that all the animals are kept in quarantine after their arrival in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (c) All live animals especially dogs when imported were being cleared on payment of customs duty and other charges on production of health certificates issued by the concerned authorities of country of origin. In the absence of such certificate, the animals used to be kept under the observation of Animal Quarantine Officer for a stipulated period. During the last three years, 166 live animals were imported and cleared on payment of duty and other charges.

Instructions have since been issued to the field formations of Customs & Central Excise to allow clearance of live animals only against valid import licence and after clearance from the Animal Quarantine Authorities.